

## Reading Novices Competition

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At the beginning of June the Hythe Aqua synchro squad travelled to Berkshire for the Reading Novices Invitational competition. For some, it was one of many events, for seven youngsters it was their first experience of a synchronised swimming competition.

Despite the early start, most swimmers had smiles on their faces as they arrived at the venue. First up was the figures event, with 3 categories and age groups to contend with.

The novice squad, having only started synchro in February 2014, enjoyed themselves tremendously, with some very credible results in a tough event.

In Section C, 8-10 years, Sandra Vroeman came 12th, out of 16 competitors in her first synchro event. In Section C, 9-12 years, Georgia Smith 19th, Isabelle Clark 64th, Amy Bondzio 65th and Imogen Clark 67th, out of nearly 90 competitors. For Imogen, Isabelle and Amy, this was their first event. In Section C, 13-19 years age group, Ellie Sturgess won a silver medal, with Sadie Foord 9th and Maya Stonestreet 11th. For Maya, this was also her first event, competing against some more experienced competitors.

Section B, 9-12 age group Lexie Foord achieved 25th place. In the 13-19 age group, Emily Lennon came 5th, and teammate Allana Winstanley 7th from 30 competitors.

In Section A, 13-19 years age group, the competition was fierce, and in particular, between the 5 Hythe Aqua swimmers in this section.

Lara Porteous scooped the gold medal position, with a score of 58.000, a solid 2 points ahead of her rivals. Close behind were her teammates, Suzannah Turner, in 4th, missing out on Bronze medal by just 0.113 points, Lucie Challinor in 5th, Brianne Begley 11th and Ana Cassaniga Simmons 12th from 28 competitors. Porteous was also awarded the trophy for the highest scoring Section A swimmers across the age groups.

In the 9-19 years routine event, Hythe's 19&under team, nicknamed the Bongos, and consisting of Brianne Begley, Ana Cassaniga Simmons, Lucie Challinor, Lexie Foord, Sadie Foord, Emily Lennon, Lara Porteous, Ellie Sturgess, Suzannah Turner and Allana Winstanley swam their African themed routine to take the gold medal and trophy, 2 points ahead of their nearest rivals Bracknell.

After completing their routine, there was a tense wait, as the team had been awarded a 1.0 point penalty for incorrect deckwork, but this was later withdrawn, leaving the team with a total score of 29.700 with Bracknell in 2nd (27.300) and Witney and District in 3rd (27.100).

Head coach, Erica Moo stated "it was such a good result for the squad, as the girls have worked incredibly hard towards this event. For our novice squad to achieve such good results at their first major competition, and for the seniors to win the gold medal for the figures and routines was unbelievable. Hopefully all the girls are looking forward to starting their new routines ready for their next competitions in September and October and have been inspired by these results".

Hythe Aqua Synchronised Swimming Squad are always on the lookout for new members. If you are aged between 7 and 14, enjoy the water and are interested in attending a tryout session, call 07821 413193 or email [hythesynchro@googlemail.com](mailto:hythesynchro@googlemail.com) for more information.